ALASKA ECONOMIC TRENDS

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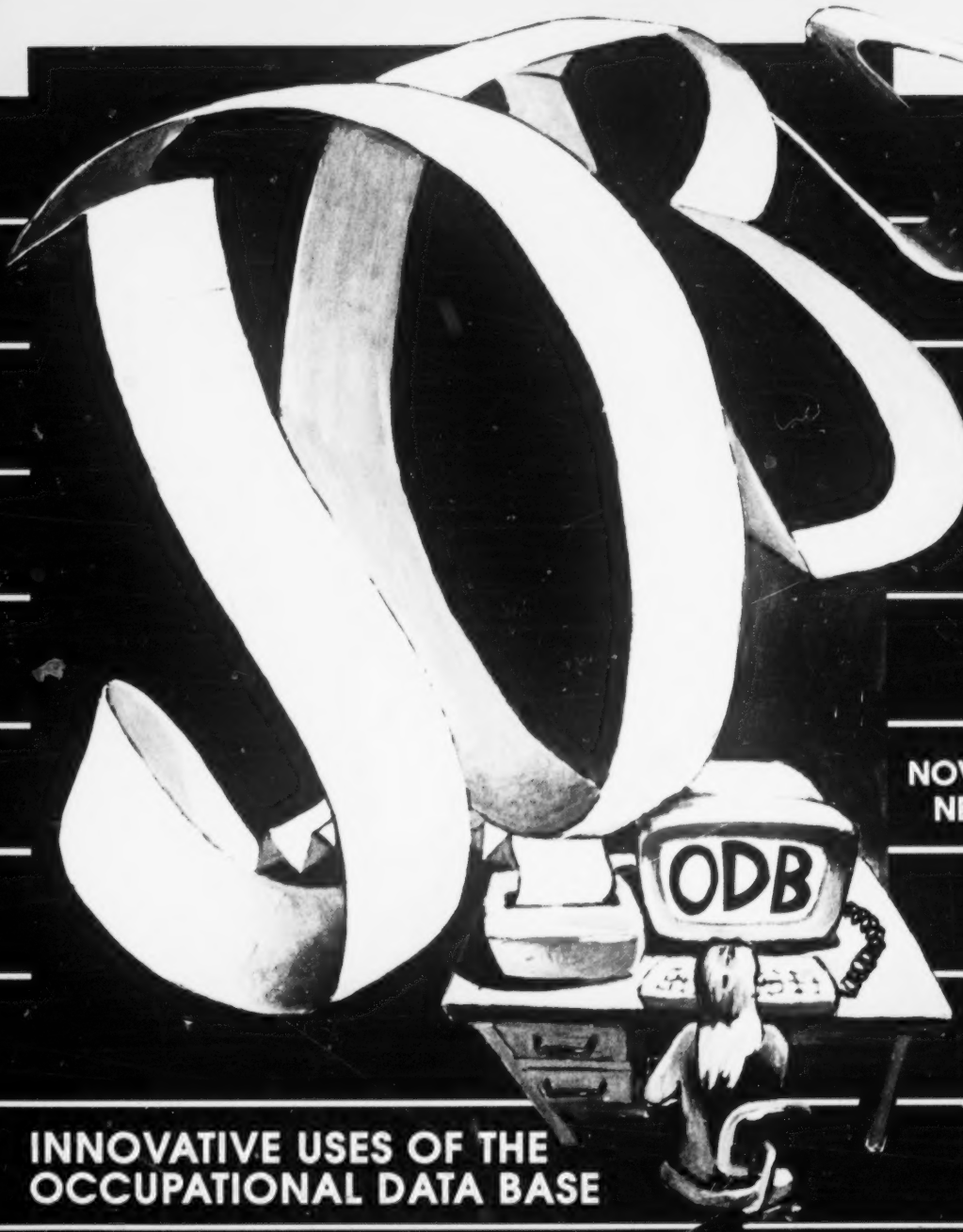
February 1992



NOVEMBER JOBLESS RATE NEARS DOUBLE DIGITS

INNOVATIVE USES OF THE OCCUPATIONAL DATA BASE

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
WALTER J. HICKEL, GOVERNOR

ALASKA ECONOMIC
TRENDS

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Innovative Uses of the Occupational Data Base

by JoAnn Wilson

It is commonplace today to observe that the work place is undergoing rapid change. Economic and technological developments are creating new jobs, making others obsolete, and changing the skill requirements of existing jobs. Demographic changes are profoundly influencing the composition of the labor force. Getting the localized, up-to-date occupational information necessary for planning education and training programs which are responsive to these changes and measuring the effectiveness of these programs is essential.

Alaska is unique in having access to such information. The Alaska Department of Labor (AKDOL) Research and Analysis collects occupation and place-of-work information for most of the state's wage and salary workers in addition to the employer, wage and industry information typically collected by the other states. This one-of-a-kind data source is called the Alaska Occupational Data Base (ODB).

By crossmatching the Occupational Data Base with other information sources, it is possible to:

- Target training programs by identifying entry-level positions not currently being filled by Alaskans, women or other worker groups.
- Examine the occupational patterns and earnings of a particular geographic area, industry or population.
- Track the career paths of high school and college program graduates.
- Monitor the performance of education and training programs through the measurement of pre- and post-training earnings differentials and the relationship between the occupation for which a person was trained and the occupation in which the graduate or completer is currently working.

The Alaska Department of Labor currently crossmatches the ODB with its wage records, unemployment insurance data and other administrative records. AKDOL does not release data that would reveal the identity of any individual. Confidentiality of individuals is strictly maintained.

There are some limitations to the data. For example, because the information applies only to persons holding wage and salary employment in Alaska, it excludes those who are employed in another state, self-employed, in the military or attending school full time. Information on persons employed by the federal government is also lacking. In the future, AKDOL hopes to add data on federal and military personnel as well as information

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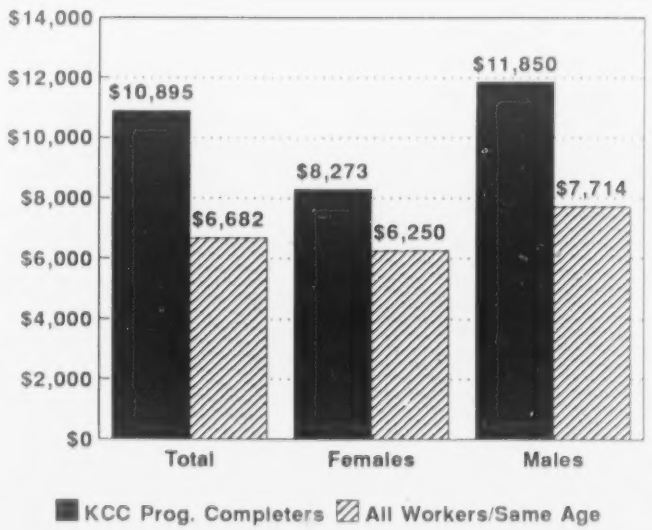
Figure • 1

Completers 1990 Average Earnings Exceed All Alaskan Workers the Same Age



Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section.

Table • 1

Top 10 Occupations for Selected Alaska Geographic Areas (by employment) 1st Quarter 1991

	ANCHORAGE	FAIRBANKS	JUNEAU	KETCHIKAN	DILLINGHAM	VALDEZ-CORDOVA
#1	General Office Occupations	Sales Clerks	Sales Clerks	Manual Occupations, NEC	Teacher Aides	Construction Laborers
#2	Secretaries	Janitors & Cleaners	General Office Occupations	Sales Clerks	Janitors & Cleaners	Teacher Aides
#3	Sales Clerks	General Office Occupations	Janitors & Cleaners	General Office Occupations	Elementary School Teachers	Guards & Police, Excluding Public Service
#4	Waiters & Waitresses	Secretaries	Waiters & Waitresses	Carpenters	Mechanics & Repairers, NEC	Misc. Hand-Working Occupations
#5	Misc. Food & Beverage Prep. Occupations	Waiters & Waitresses	Kitchen Workers, Food Prep.	Bookkeepers & Accounting Clerks	Health Aides, Excluding Nursing	Stevedores
#6	Bookkeepers & Accounting Clerks	Adult Ed & Other Teachers, NEC	Secretaries	Elementary School Teachers	General Office Occupations	General Office Occupations
#7	Janitors & Cleaners	Teachers, Postsecondary	Bookkeepers & Accounting Clerks	Misc. Food & Beverage Prep. Occupations	Secretaries	Janitors & Cleaners
#8	Kitchen Workers, Food Prep.	Food Counter & Related Occupations	Cashiers	Teacher Aides	Secondary School Teachers	Secretaries
#9	Receptionists	Construction Laborers	Teachers, Postsecondary	Bartenders	Kitchen Workers, Food Prep.	Elementary School Teachers
#10	Counter Clerks	Elementary School Teachers	Stock Handlers & Baggers	Secretaries	Dispatchers	Manual Occupations, NEC

NEC = Not Elsewhere Classified.

Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research & Analysis, Occupational Data Base (ODB)

1 *Information on occupational patterns by geographic area has been included in a microcomputer-based slide show just completed by DOL Research and Analysis. The slide show will be made available to secondary students throughout Alaska by DOL's Employment Security Division. The data derived from the ODB will give students making career decisions information on the most numerous occupations in their own local area.*

from other Pacific Northwest states on the industry and earnings of Alaska's graduates who have left the state. In the meantime, research findings must be scrutinized with these exceptions in mind.

Identifying Alaska occupations filled by nonresidents

The Occupational Data Base was originally established to identify the economic impact of nonresident workers. While its use has become much broader, identifying occupations with large numbers of nonresidents can point out training and employment opportunities for Alaskans.

A recent analysis of Alaska occupations filled by nonresidents in 1990 revealed that the occupation with the largest percentage of nonresidents was hand cutters/trimmers (76.1% of total employment). The group with the largest number of nonresident workers was miscellaneous hand working occupations (4,896). Most of these workers are employed in seafood processing.

In 1990, nonresident workers totaled 20,515 for the ten Alaska occupations with the largest number of nonresidents. These occupations were, in addition to miscellaneous hand-working occupations, manual occupations not elsewhere classified (4,367), hand cutters/trimmers (2,056), waiters and waitresses (1,589), salesclerks (1,583), miscellaneous food and beverage preparers (1,425), general office occupations (1,349), construction laborers (1,145), cooks except short order (1,111) and janitors and cleaners (994).

Examining the occupational patterns of geographic areas

Knowing the occupational patterns of geographic areas can shed light on local economies and is critical in planning education and training programs. Occupations in which a large number of workers are employed in a particular geographic area clearly present more opportunities to local residents than occupations in which few persons are employed.[1]

Table 1 lists the "Top 10" occupations (by total number employed) for selected geographic areas in Alaska. The information is for the first quarter of 1991.

Tracking completers of a high school vocational program

A study detailing employment and wage information about 259 senior-level students attending the Martin Luther King Career Center in Anchorage in 1987 was recently completed in cooperation with the Alaska Department of Education and the University of Alaska Anchorage. The center is part of the Anchorage School District and offers vocational training programs to secondary students.

The cooperating agencies approached the Department of Labor because they wanted to determine the feasibility of conducting secondary student follow-up studies using AKDOL data instead of mail or telephone surveys which typically yield spotty results.

The students, who had completed three or more units in 1987 in related occupational studies, or course "clusters," were tracked for the four-year period 1987-1990. There was strong evidence for the positive effects of the training. This was true even though the students included in the study had typically completed only three units at the center.

The study found that, overall, 25% of the students working in wage and salary employment in Alaska in 1990 were employed in industries and/or occupations related to their course of study.

The occupational cluster most associated with related employment was Automated Office Occupations (75%). Other course clusters with higher-than-average related placements were Child Care (40%), Construction (36.3%), Aviation Maintenance (35.7%), Auto Mechanics/Auto Body (35.5%), Computer Programming/Computer Operation (33.3%) and Tourism (28.6%). Occupational clusters with the fewest related placements were Health Occupations (7.1%) and Graphic Arts & Communication (3.8%).

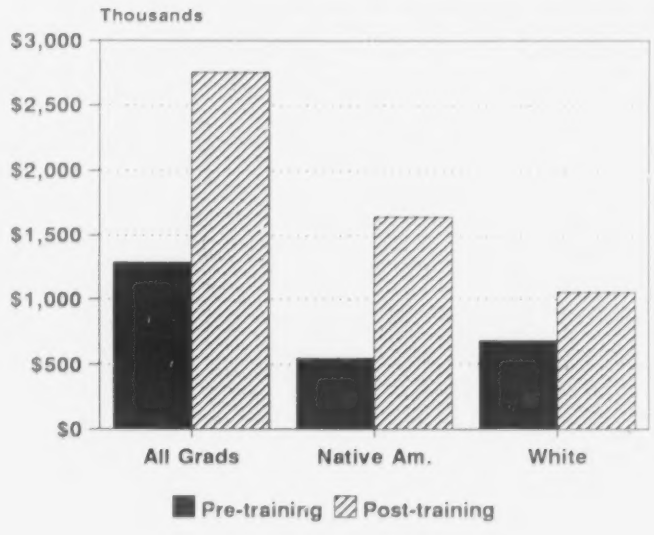
Most of the students (60%) were working in retail trade or services in 1990. While this pattern of employment differs from the general work force (in 1990, retail trade and services accounted for only 37.4% of total Alaska wage and salary employment), it appears to be characteristic for workers of the same age. Looking only at those persons in the Alaska labor force born in 1968 and 1969 (the same age as the King Career Center students), retail trade and services accounted for 61.4% of 1990 employment.

Total earnings for all students working in 1990 was up 86% over 1988 (the first full year after completion). For those students working in 1990, total earnings rose from $1,068,440 in 1988 to $1,987,741 in 1990.

Average earnings of the students exceeded those of other Alaska workers of the same age both overall and by gender (see Figure 1). The King Career Center students earned 63% more, on average, than other workers their age in 1990. By gender, males earned 54% more and females, 32% more, than their same-age counterparts.

F i g u r e • 2

Total Earnings Year Before and After Training
SFY 1989 AVTEC Graduates



Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section.

The highest 1990 average earnings were received by students in Surveying ($21,192). This was well above the occupational cluster with the next highest earnings, Auto Mechanics/Auto Body ($14,499). The lowest annual average earnings were received by students in Health Occupations ($8,613).

Most of the King Career Center students holding wage and salary employment in Alaska in 1990 were working in the Anchorage Borough (81%). This finding is significant because it was assumed that a large proportion of the students leave the area after completing their secondary studies.

Tracking college program graduates

The University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) recently reviewed the accounting emphasis of its Bachelor in Business Administration degree program. As a part of this review, UAS asked AKDOL Research and Analysis to provide 1990 employment information on the students who had graduated from the program since fall 1984.

AKDOL found that approximately 70% of the UAS students had 1990 Alaska wage and salary employment. Of these, 87% were employed as accountants or in closely allied professions, an impressively high proportion of professional placement. Virtually all (96%) of the students were working in Southeast Alaska, a much higher proportion than university officials had expected.

UAS considers the information provided by this study to be so valuable that it has made a commitment to its accrediting agency to make routine use of the ODB in its analysis of outcomes of education at the university.

Monitoring the performance of a postsecondary vocational training program

For the second consecutive year, AKDOL Research and Analysis conducted a study of the pre- and post-training performance of the graduates of the Alaska Vocational Technical Center (AVTEC) in Seward. Information was analyzed for 204 students who completed training in SFY 1989.

Nearly half (48%) of the graduates working in wage and salary employment in Alaska in the year following training were employed in industries and/or occupations which were related to their course of study. The occupational program most associated with related employment was Roughneck Development (100%), followed by Industrial Electrical Maintenance (80%), Office Occupations (64.5%), and Commercial Baking Technology, Heavy Equipment Mechanics and Marine Refrigeration Technology (all at 50%). The one with the fewest related placements was Welding Technology (16%).

Total earnings for all graduates were up 115% from the year before training began. By ethnic group, total earnings increased 201% for Native Americans and 55% for Whites. (See Figure 2.) Graduates in Industrial Electrical Maintenance had the highest percentage increase in total earnings (924%) when comparing pre- and post-training data. High percentage increases were also realized by graduates in Heavy Equipment Mechanics (344%), Forest Technology (315%), Food Service Technology (299%), Auto Technology (218%) and Roughneck Development (203%). Lower-than-average increases were received by graduates in Office Occupations (104%), Building Maintenance (47%) and Power Plant Operations (37%).

The highest 1990 average earnings were received by graduates in Roughneck Development ($34,730). Graduates in Industrial Electrical Maintenance received the next highest earnings ($26,617). The lowest annual average earnings were received by graduates in Auto Technology ($9,934) and Commercial Baking Technology ($7,055). Overall, the average earnings of workers the year after graduation was $15,291. By ethnic group, average earnings were $16,738 for Native Americans and $13,501 for Whites. These represent after-graduation increases of 201% and 55%, respectively.

Conclusion

These studies indicate the enormous potential of the Occupational Data Base. Information gained from the ODB can identify education and training programs that will be most effective for a particular worker group or geographic area. It can show students which occupations present the most opportunities for employment in their own region or community. And it can help the administrators of education and training programs to evaluate existing programs and develop new ones that reflect current labor market conditions.

Future AKDOL-planned studies using the ODB include evaluations of Alaska's State Training and Employment Program (STEP), a pilot program funded by employee contributions to the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund, and the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program administered by the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. As training resources become increasingly scarce, studies such as those highlighted in this article will surely gain in importance.

Summary Tape File 3A

The U.S. Census Bureau will be releasing Summary Tape File 3A (STF) for all states beginning late January 1992. The ALASKA STATE DATA CENTER (ASDC) expects the Alaska data will be available by mid-February. The bureau intends to have all state's data released by May 1992.

The data on STF 3A will include information on education, labor force status, disability, ancestry, occupation, and poverty status.
The data is considered sample data as it was only collected on the 1990 census "long" form. Additional data items are: total housing units, year structure was built, condominium for rent or for sale, plumbing facilities, telephone, number of vehicles, gross rent, mortgages, and home equity loans.

All of the subject characteristics will be available at the state, census area, place, census designated place (CDP), Alaska Native Statistical Area, Census Tract/Block Numbering Area, and Block Group geographic levels.

The STF 3A file will be available to data users on magnetic tape from the ASDC. Interested users may send a blank tape which will be copied and returned (contact the ASDC for tape specifications). Technical documentation is included on the tape. The census bureau intends to have STF 3A available on CD-ROM within 6-8 weeks after the release of the tape. The ASDC will also produce state and census area profiles of different characteristics for public distribution in both hard copy and diskette format.

The following lists show the types of data available from STF 3A:

Race by Sex by Employment Status (for male, female, and all races)
for Persons 16 years and over
in the labor force
In Armed Forces
Civilian employed or unemployed
Not in the labor force

Occupations of employed persons 16 years and over:
Managerial and professional specialty occupations
Executive, administrative, and managerial
Professional specialties
Technical, sales, and administrative support occupations
Technicians and related support
Sales
Administrative support including clerical
Service occupations
Private household
Protective services
Farming, forestry, and fishing occupations
Precision, production, craft, and repair occupations
Operators, fabricators, and laborers
Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors
Transportation and material movers
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helps and laborers

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November Jobless Rate Approaches Double-Digits

By John Boucher

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Alaska's unemployment rate was a sign of a slower economy in November. For the first time since the spring of 1988 the jobless rate approached the double-digit level. The 9.8% unemployment rate was the highest for the state since May 1988—when unemployment was 10.1%. The spring and summer of 1988 are generally regarded as the recovery point from the recession of 1986-87.

One particularly unsettling fact about November's jobless rate was the unfavorable comparison to Alaska's unemployment rate of one year ago. Last November the unemployment rate was 6.7% and about 16,900 Alaskans were out of work. This November, the number of unemployed Alaskans swelled to more than 25,000. (See Table 4.) This represents the largest year-to-year increase in unemployment since the recession.

In this otherwise relatively bleak picture, there was one good sign in November. Nonagricultural wage and salary employment posted the highest rate of growth over the year in the last several months—with 5,900 more jobs this November than last November. Temporary gains in government employment, along with continued strength in the services, transportation and seafood sectors, combined to bolster job growth compared to last November to 2.5%. (See Table 1.)

Table • 1

Nonagricultural Wage and Salary Employment by Place of Work — Alaska

	p/ 11/91	r/ 10/91	11/90	Changes from: 10/91	11/90
Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	237,000	242,200	231,100	-5,200	5,900
Goods-producing	34,100	37,300	34,200	-3,200	-100
Mining	10,900	11,300	11,700	-400	-800
Construction	10,100	12,100	10,300	-2,000	-200
Manufacturing	13,100	13,900	12,200	-800	900
Durable Goods	3,000	3,500	3,400	-500	-400
Lumber & Wood Products	2,200	2,500	2,700	-300	-500
Nondurable Goods	10,100	10,400	8,800	-300	1,300
Seafood Processing	6,200	6,600	5,000	-400	1,200
Pulp Mills	900	900	900	0	0
Service-producing	202,900	204,900	196,900	-2,000	6,000
Transportation	20,800	21,800	20,000	-1,000	800
Trucking & Warehousing	2,600	2,700	2,500	-100	100
Water Transportation	1,300	1,500	1,200	-200	100
Air Transportation	6,600	6,800	6,400	-200	200
Communications	3,500	3,600	3,400	-100	100
Trade	47,000	47,300	46,100	-300	900
Wholesale Trade	8,000	8,100	8,200	-100	-200
Retail Trade	39,000	39,200	37,900	-200	1,100
Gen. Merch. & Apparel	6,900	6,600	6,300	300	600
Food Stores	6,800	6,800	6,400	0	400
Eating & Drinking Places	12,600	13,200	12,800	-600	-200
Finance-Ins. & Real Estate	10,200	10,200	10,200	0	0
Services & Misc.	51,500	52,600	49,700	-1,100	1,800
Hotels & Lodging Places	4,700	5,200	4,800	-500	-100
Government	73,400	73,000	70,900	400	2,500
Federal	18,700	18,800	18,000	-100	700
State	21,900	21,700	21,600	200	300
Local	32,800	32,500	31,300	300	1,500

Notes: Prepared in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Government includes teachers in primary and secondary schools, and personnel employed by the University of Alaska.

The employment numbers that appear here are definitionally different from those that appear in the Labor Force table.

Benchmark: March 1990
p/ denotes preliminary estimates
r/ denotes revised estimates

Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research & Analysis Section.

High seasonal unemployment... back to the "bad old days"?

November's 9.8% statewide unemployment rate was the highest for that month since 1987. A 9.8% statewide rate, however, is not too unusual, historically. The November rate might be considered a return to a more normal rate of unemployment for Alaska in November. During the 1980s, the November unemployment rate averaged 9.3%. If you disregard the exceptionally low rate posted in 1989, the average unemployment rate during November in the '80s was 9.7%. Looking at the longer term, the relatively low rates posted during 1989 and 1990 look more like aberrations than the November 1991 rate. (See Figure 1.)

What made November of 1989 and 1990 unique compared to most Novembers? A rare combination

of strong Alaskan employment growth with a relatively strong national economy which had slowed down the flow of jobseekers coming to Alaska for employment opportunities. This November, the national recession has pushed jobseekers into exploring Alaska as a place where they could find work. Unfortunately, they're arriving at a time when many of Alaska's industries are struggling to maintain their employment.

A different kind of slowdown

During the last 15 years or so, it has been a popular notion that there is a countercyclical relationship between Alaska's economy and the national economy. National recessions in 1974, 1980 and 1982 occurred during times when Alaska's economy was expanding. This led to the belief that when Alaska's economy is going well, the national economy suffers, and vice versa.

Another trait those three national recessions had in common was a period of relatively high oil prices. It is more than coincidence that Alaska's economic engines revved up during those time periods. In one form or another, the oil industry or the revenue it generated helped fuel expansion in Alaska's economy while higher oil prices either caused or contributed to a slowdown in the national economy.

This is the first time in recent memory that a slowdown in Alaska's economy has occurred during a national recession. This recession is one cause for the dramatic change in Alaska's labor market picture since last November.

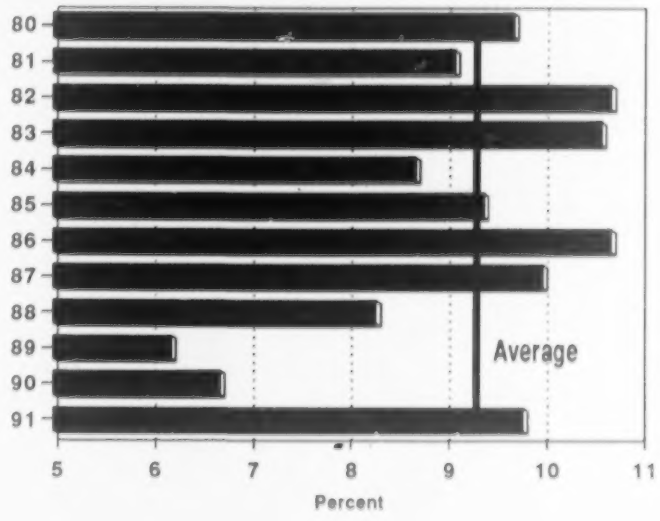
Early in this national recession, Alaska benefitted from higher oil prices, but that was more a result of the Gulf War than any other factor. Currently oil prices are sliding and Alaska's two largest oil producers are reducing operations. Employment growth has slowed in other industries as well. In the meantime, there appears to be no let up in the national recession. During previous national recessions, Alaskan employment growth, fueled by higher oil prices, helped provide jobseekers employment opportunities. Currently there is no major economic stimulus to provide the employment opportunities necessary to keep up with in-migrants. This worsening of the labor market picture has also made it difficult for those who lose jobs to find new employment.

Why did November employment show renewed growth?

Looking at the November nonagricultural wage and salary employment counts defies the analysis that job growth has slowed down considerably. (See Table 1.) November's employment level was 2.5% above last November, the strongest year-to-year growth rate posted since the first quarter of the year. Some of that growth, however, is a temporary phenomenon which will evaporate quickly.

Figure • 1

November '91 Unemployment Above Average



Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section.

T a b l e • 2

Nonagricultural Wage and Salary Employment By Place of Work

Municipality of Anchorage

	p/ 11/91	r/ 10/91	Changes from: 11/90	10/91	11/90
Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	113,650	114,850	111,000	-1,200	2,650
Goods-producing	11,400	12,650	11,550	-1,250	-150
Mining	3,550	3,650	3,850	-100	-300
Construction	5,700	6,750	5,650	-1,050	50
Manufacturing	2,150	2,250	2,050	-100	100
Service-producing	102,250	102,200	99,450	50	2,800
Transportation	11,250	11,500	10,800	-250	450
Trucking & Warehousing	1,600	1,650	1,500	-50	100
Water Transportation	300	300	300	0	0
Air Transportation	4,100	4,150	4,000	-50	100
Communications	2,150	2,150	1,950	0	200
Trade	26,650	26,600	26,600	50	50
Wholesale Trade	5,700	5,800	6,000	-100	-300
Retail Trade	20,950	20,800	20,600	150	350
Gen. Merch. & Apparel	3,550	3,350	3,300	200	250
Food Stores	3,550	3,500	3,100	50	450
Eating & Drinking Places	7,500	7,550	7,800	-50	-300
Finance-Ins. & Real Estate	6,600	6,500	6,500	100	100
Services & Misc.	29,600	29,900	28,750	-300	850
Hotels & Lodging Places	2,650	2,550	2,400	100	250
Government	28,150	27,700	26,800	450	1,350
Federal	10,400	10,450	10,250	-50	150
State	8,300	8,150	8,150	150	150
Local	9,450	9,100	8,400	350	1,050

Fairbanks North Star Borough

	p/ 11/91	r/ 10/91	Changes from: 11/90	10/91	11/90
Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	28,250	28,800	27,000	-550	1,250
Goods-producing	2,050	2,550	2,150	-500	-100
Mining	150	200	100	-50	50
Construction	1,350	1,700	1,500	-350	-150
Manufacturing	550	650	550	-100	0
Service-producing	26,200	26,250	24,850	-50	1,350
Transportation	2,050	2,150	2,000	-100	50
Trucking & Warehousing	450	450	500	0	-50
Air Transportation	450	450	450	0	0
Communications	300	300	300	0	0
Trade	6,600	6,600	5,850	0	750
Wholesale Trade	750	750	700	0	50
Retail Trade	5,850	5,850	5,150	0	700
Gen. Merch. & Apparel	1,050	950	650	100	400
Food Stores	850	850	800	0	50
Eating & Drinking Places	1,900	2,050	1,850	-150	50
Finance-Ins. & Real Estate	750	750	750	0	0
Services & Misc.	6,300	6,350	6,050	-50	250
Government	10,500	10,400	10,200	100	300
Federal	3,050	3,100	3,000	-50	50
State	4,600	4,450	4,400	150	200
Local	2,850	2,850	2,800	0	50

Anchorage-MatSu Region

	p/ 11/91	r/ 10/91	Changes from: 11/90	10/91	11/90
Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	121,600	123,100	118,600	-1,500	3,000
Goods-producing	11,950	13,250	12,200	-1,300	-250
Mining	3,750	3,800	4,050	-50	-300
Construction	5,950	7,100	6,000	-1,150	-50
Manufacturing	2,250	2,350	2,150	-100	100
Service-producing	109,650	109,850	106,400	-200	3,250
Transportation	12,050	12,300	11,500	-250	550
Trade	28,550	28,550	28,500	0	50
Finance-Ins. & Real Estate	7,050	7,000	6,950	50	100
Services & Misc.	31,100	31,500	30,100	-400	1,000
Government	30,900	30,500	29,350	400	1,550
Federal	10,600	10,650	10,300	-50	300
State	9,100	9,000	8,950	100	150
Local	11,200	10,850	10,100	350	1,100

Interior Region

	p/ 11/91	r/ 10/91	Changes from: 11/90	10/91	11/90
Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	32,350	33,050	30,650	-700	1,700
Goods-producing	2,300	2,850	2,300	-550	0
Mining	300	400	250	-100	50
Construction	1,400	1,800	1,500	-400	-100
Manufacturing	600	650	550	-50	50
Service-producing	30,050	30,200	28,350	-150	1,700
Transportation	2,250	2,500	2,200	-250	50
Trade	7,050	7,050	6,300	0	750
Finance-Ins. & Real Estate	800	800	800	0	0
Services	6,950	6,950	6,550	0	400
Government	13,000	12,900	12,500	100	500
Federal	3,700	3,750	3,550	-50	150
State	4,850	4,700	4,650	150	200
Local	4,450	4,450	4,300	0	150

Nonagricultural Wage and Salary Employment By Place of Work

Southeast Region

	p/ 11/91	r/ 10/91	11/90	Changes from: 10/91	Changes from: 11/90
Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	31,850	33,300	32,050	-1,450	-200
Goods-producing	5,400	6,150	5,850	-750	-450
Mining	350	350	350	0	0
Construction	1,150	1,250	1,100	-100	50
Manufacturing	3,900	4,550	4,400	-650	-500
Durable Goods	1,950	2,250	2,450	-300	-500
Lumber & Wood Products	1,900	2,150	2,350	-250	-450
Nondurable Goods	1,950	2,300	1,950	-350	0
Seafood Processing	850	1,150	900	-300	-50
Pulp Mills	900	900	850	0	50
Service-producing	26,450	27,150	26,200	-700	250
Transportation	2,400	2,650	2,400	-250	0
Trade	5,400	5,400	5,200	0	200
Wholesale Trade	600	600	550	0	50
Retail Trade	4,800	4,800	4,650	0	150
Finance-Ins. & Real Estate	1,000	1,050	1,050	-50	-50
Services & Misc.	5,350	5,550	5,200	-200	150
Government	12,300	12,500	12,350	-200	-50
Federal	2,050	2,100	2,150	-50	-100
State	5,400	5,400	5,400	0	0
Local	4,850	5,000	4,800	-150	50

Gulf Coast Region

	p/ 11/91	r/ 10/91	11/90	Changes from: 10/91	Changes from: 11/90
Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	21,550	22,600	21,300	-1,050	250
Goods-producing	4,700	5,400	4,650	-700	50
Mining	1,150	1,200	1,150	-50	0
Construction	1,000	1,050	1,050	-50	-50
Manufacturing	2,550	3,150	2,450	-600	100
Seafood Processing	1,700	2,250	1,500	-550	200
Service-producing	16,850	17,200	16,650	-350	200
Transportation	1,900	2,000	1,850	-100	50
Trade	3,800	3,900	3,800	-100	0
Wholesale Trade	450	450	450	0	0
Retail Trade	3,350	3,450	3,350	-100	0
Finance-Ins. & Real Estate	650	650	650	0	0
Services & Misc.	4,450	4,550	4,450	-100	0
Government	6,050	6,100	5,900	-50	150
Federal	550	550	450	0	100
State	1,850	1,900	1,850	-50	0
Local	3,650	3,650	3,600	0	50

Northern Region

	p/ 11/91	r/ 10/91	11/90	Changes from: 10/91	Changes from: 11/90
Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	14,800	15,050	14,750	-250	50
Goods-producing	5,850	6,150	6,350	-300	-500
Mining	5,400	5,650	5,900	-250	-500
Service-producing	8,950	8,900	8,400	50	550
Government	4,600	4,700	4,450	-100	150
Federal	250	300	300	-50	-50
State	400	400	350	0	50
Local	3,950	4,000	3,800	-50	150

Southwest Region

	p/ 11/91	r/ 10/91	11/90	Changes from: 10/91	Changes from: 11/90
Total Nonag. Wage & Salary	15,150	14,650	13,900	500	1,250
Goods-producing	3,950	3,250	2,900	700	1,050
Seafood Processing	3,650	2,900	2,550	750	1,100
Service-producing	11,200	11,400	11,000	-200	200
Government	6,450	6,500	6,350	-50	100
Federal	1,300	1,300	1,300	0	0
State	550	550	550	0	0
Local	4,600	4,650	4,500	-50	100

Notes: *Government includes teachers in primary and secondary schools, and personnel employed by the University of Alaska.*

The employment numbers that appear above are definitionally different from those that appear in the Labor Force table.

Benchmark: March 1990

p/ denotes preliminary estimates
r/ denotes revised estimates

Source: *Alaska Department of Labor, Research & Analysis Section.*

Table • 3

Alaska Hours and Earnings for Selected Industries

	Average Weekly Earnings			Average Weekly Hours			Average Hourly Earnings		
	p/ 11/91	r/ 10/91	11/90	p/ 11/91	r/ 10/91	11/90	p/ 11/91	r/ 10/91	11/90
Mining	$1,139.40	$1,116.34	$1,174.64	48.3	48.6	49.5	$23.59	$22.97	$23.73
Construction	1,020.82	1,133.31	1,040.17	43.2	46.6	43.0	23.63	24.32	24.19
Manufacturing	502.14	549.70	505.59	40.3	40.9	37.9	12.46	13.44	13.34
Seafood Processing	363.65	402.11	380.59	39.7	41.2	41.1	9.16	9.76	9.26
Trans., Comm. & Utilities	618.37	622.87	591.66	35.6	34.7	34.2	17.37	17.95	17.30
Trade	364.20	355.62	355.95	33.2	32.3	32.3	10.97	11.01	11.02
Wholesale	576.41	583.30	567.55	38.3	38.0	39.8	15.05	15.35	14.26
Retail	322.32	308.82	311.61	32.2	31.1	30.7	10.01	9.93	10.15
Finance-Ins. & R.E	420.70	413.66	406.55	35.0	34.3	34.6	12.02	12.06	11.75

Notes:
p/ denotes preliminary estimates
r/ denotes revised estimates
Benchmark: March 1990

Averages are based on data for full- and part-time production workers (manufacturing) and nonsupervisory workers (nonmanufacturing) and are for gross earnings and hours paid, including overtime pay and hours.

Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Research & Analysis Section.

Government employment showed an increase of nearly 2,500 jobs since last November, but a good portion of that should disappear as early as next month. For example, local government employment, particularly the noneducation portion, was bolstered by temporary employees hired to conduct local elections in October. Local government employment is expected to show significantly less growth in December when these temporary employees don't influence the employment counts. A good portion of the employment growth in state government is attributable to the University of Alaska. Indications, however, are that the bulk of the growth has come from part-time and student employees rather than growth in full-time positions.

That is not to say that all of the job growth in government is illusory. Federal government employment, particularly that associated with the military, continues to boost employment counts. Additional personnel in Alaska's local school districts brought on to handle bulging school enrollments should keep the education sector of local government employment up compared to last year.

The second largest source of employment growth compared to last November is the services sector. Services employment growth has slowed somewhat recently, but business services, medical services and engineering and management services have continued to post employment gains. The hotel and motel sector and personal services portions of the industry have dropped off slightly.

Recession mindset affecting retailers?

The trade sector, particularly retail trade establishments, also posted some slight employment growth compared to last November. The opening of two large retail stores in Fairbanks in October continued the trend of slight expansion in the retail sector. November is traditionally the month when retailers who have large Christmas seasons add staff for the holidays. While November employment numbers are too early to gauge the relative strength of the Christmas season, newspaper accounts from Alaskan retailers reported being behind last year's relatively strong pace. One Juneau merchant reported that sales were off compared to last year due to the national recession as much as local economic circumstances. Due to the poor national economy, the marketing strategies of national chain stores included discounting merchandise for the holiday season. Last year discounts on merchandise during the Christmas rush were less prevalent for Alaskan retailers. The result is the "playing field" for the Christmas season was slightly different this year because of the mindset of national retailers.

Southwest seafood processing still adding jobs

The bottomfish industry in Southwest Alaska is the main reason why the manufacturing industry was able to post some job gains compared to last November. Bottomfish closures in the Kodiak area have idled some plants, but the Southwest region keeps posting employment gains.

Southwest crab processors breathed a sigh of relief in November when a week-long strike by crab fishermen over the price for tanner (bairdi) crab was settled. Prior to 1990, the bairdi opening was held in January, but it was moved to November so that the king crab and bairdi openings would be back-to-back. Processors could therefore avoid the cost of mobilizing for two different openings. Some processors and fisherman want the bairdi opening to return to January though because they feel the extra two months gives the crab time to fill out and become a more valuable product in the marketplace. One Dutch Harbor processor claimed that a shut down of the tanner season in November would have cost processors millions to recover.

November numbers show economy is weaker

Despite slight growth in nonagricultural wage and salary employment, indications are clear that Alaska's economy has weakened significantly. Unemployment in Alaska is up significantly from 1991 due to jobseekers coming from the Lower 48 to escape the recession and employment growth slowing down in many sectors of the economy.

Alaska's economy is entering some relatively uncharted waters. During the last 15 or so years, Alaska has generally experienced significant employment growth during periods when in-migration to Alaska has been high. Slow employment growth accompanied by in-migration is adding up to a much more competetive labor market for Alaskan jobseekers. In fact, the current labor market is probably the toughest for jobseekers since the recession of 1986-87.

Table • 4

Labor Force By Region and Census Area

	Labor Force			Unemployment			Rate %			Employment		
	p/ 11/91	r/ 10/91	11/90	p/ 11/91	r/ 10/91	11/90	p/ 11/91	r/ 10/91	11/90	p/ 11/91	r/ 10/91	11/90
Alaska Statewide	255,459	259,713	251,903	25,082	23,328	16,872	9.8	9.0	6.7	230,377	236,385	235,031
Anch.-MatSu Region	135,200	136,982	133,900	11,480	11,015	7,748	8.5	8.0	5.8	123,720	125,967	126,152
Munic. of Anchorage	118,155	119,686	118,006	8,887	8,618	6,008	7.5	7.2	5.1	109,268	111,068	111,998
MatSu Borough	17,045	17,296	15,894	2,593	2,397	1,740	15.2	13.9	10.9	14,452	14,899	14,154
Gulf Coast Region	28,452	29,131	27,319	4,559	3,870	2,572	16.0	13.3	9.4	23,893	25,261	24,747
Kenai Peninsula Borough	17,727	18,128	17,001	3,087	2,650	1,838	17.4	14.6	10.8	14,640	15,478	15,163
Kodiak Island Borough	6,533	6,718	6,113	955	820	335	14.6	12.2	5.5	5,578	5,898	5,778
Valdez-Cordova	4,192	4,285	4,205	517	400	399	12.3	9.3	9.5	3,675	3,885	3,806
Interior Region	36,550	37,114	35,168	4,206	3,893	3,071	11.5	10.5	8.7	32,344	33,221	32,097
Fairbanks North Star Bor.	31,531	31,972	30,339	3,486	3,167	2,508	11.1	9.9	8.3	28,045	28,805	27,831
Southeast Fairbanks	2,080	2,085	2,013	288	244	235	13.8	11.7	11.7	1,792	1,841	1,778
Yukon-Koyukuk	2,939	3,057	2,816	432	482	328	14.7	15.8	11.6	2,507	2,575	2,488
Northern Region	8,349	8,593	8,305	828	912	529	9.9	10.6	6.4	7,521	7,681	7,776
Nome	3,077	3,149	3,073	326	339	228	10.6	10.8	7.4	2,751	2,810	2,845
North Slope Borough	2,997	3,105	3,041	152	200	100	5.1	6.4	3.3	2,845	2,905	2,941
Northwest Arctic Borough	2,275	2,339	2,191	350	373	201	15.4	15.9	9.2	1,925	1,966	1,990
Southeast Region	34,225	35,376	34,855	3,306	2,908	2,296	9.7	8.2	6.6	30,919	32,468	32,559
Haines Borough	918	974	842	183	202	68	19.9	20.7	8.1	735	772	774
Juneau Borough	15,084	15,748	15,401	1,102	1,065	676	7.3	6.8	4.4	13,982	14,683	14,725
Ketchikan Gateway Bor.	6,426	6,562	6,509	696	545	475	10.8	8.3	7.3	5,730	6,017	6,034
Pr. of Wales-Outer Ketch.	2,692	2,792	2,652	412	398	251	15.3	14.3	9.5	2,280	2,394	2,401
Sitka Borough	3,982	4,074	4,136	340	249	301	8.5	6.1	7.3	3,642	3,825	3,835
Skagway-Yakutat-Angoon	1,634	1,679	1,724	210	184	225	12.9	11.0	13.1	1,424	1,495	1,499
Wrangell-Petersburg	3,489	3,547	3,591	363	265	300	10.4	7.5	8.4	3,126	3,282	3,291
Southwest Region	12,683	12,517	12,356	703	730	656	5.5	5.8	5.3	11,980	11,787	11,700
Aleutians East Borough	883	870	861	6	7	5	0.7	0.8	0.6	877	863	856
Aleutians West	2,483	2,446	2,427	26	29	27	1.0	1.2	1.1	2,457	2,417	2,400
Bethel	4,930	4,880	4,747	389	412	312	7.9	8.4	6.6	4,541	4,468	4,435
Bristol Bay Borough	499	488	473	36	32	21	7.2	6.6	4.4	463	456	452
Dillingham	2,217	2,206	2,233	48	72	114	2.2	3.3	5.1	2,169	2,134	2,119
Wade Hampton	1,671	1,627	1,615	198	178	177	11.8	10.9	11.0	1,473	1,449	1,438

Notes: *p/ denotes preliminary estimates* *r/ denotes revised estimates* *Benchmark: March 1990*

- *Federal guidelines require the use of unrounded labor force data, adjusted to be consistent with the Current Population Survey in formulas used to allocate federal funds.*
- *Comparisons between different time periods are not as meaningful as other time series published by the Alaska Department of Labor.*
- *The official definition of unemployment currently in place excludes anyone who has made no attempt to find work in the four-week period up to and including the week that includes the 12th of each month. Most Alaska economists believe that Alaska's rural localities have proportionately more of these discouraged workers.*
- *he employment numbers that appear above are definitionally different from those that appear in the Nonagricultural Wage & Salary Employment tables.*

Source: *Alaska Department of Labor, Research & Analysis Section.*

Alaska Economic Regions

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